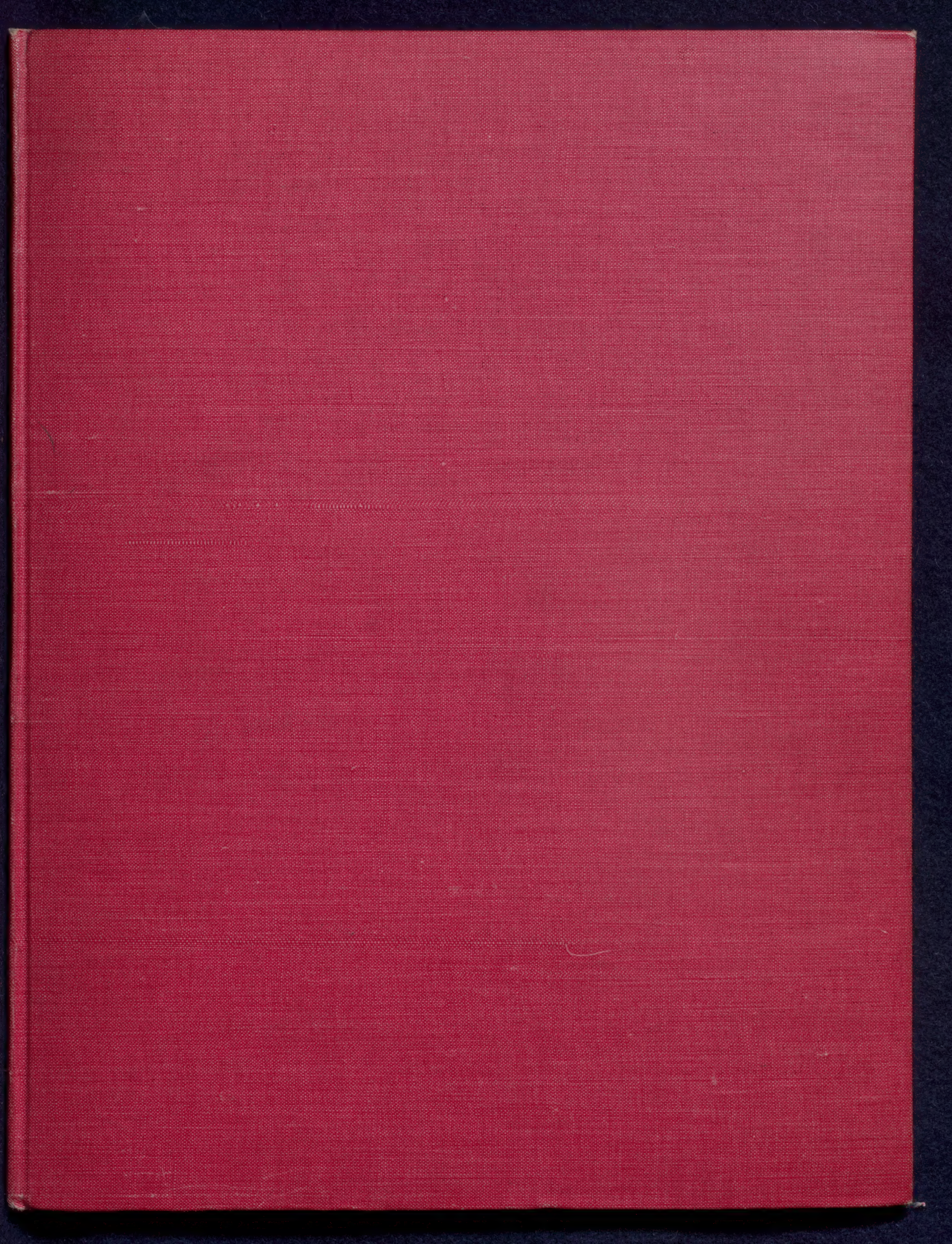






J. 6. 31

WG. 7.

RADIN (HERMAN T[HEODORE]) 1878-  
5260. The Literary Flavor in the Writings  
of Sir William Osler . . . la. 8°. [*Saranac  
Lake, N.Y.*], 1918.  
Repr. fr. The Med. Pickwick, vol. 4, pp. 292-6.

5260

FROM  
THE LIBRARY  
OF  
SIR WILLIAM OSLER, BART.  
OXFORD



80 CRESCENT ROAD  
ROSEDALE  
TORONTO.

15<sup>th</sup> November 1918

Dear Sir  
Your Paper on Sir  
William Osler's writings,  
mentioned in our letter to  
me of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst, came  
yesterday. I have read it,  
and most very, with much  
interest. My Brother is inter-  
ested in his friends.  
With many thanks  
I am  
Herman T. Raden Esq Faithfully Yours  
J. Osler.

Hon. Featherston Osler  
(1838-1924)



1800

1801

1802

1803

1804

1805

1806

1807



brother appreciated  
it greatly.

Very sincerely  
Your brother

Herman T. Raden and  
Dor

St. Edmund Order

Wraightleigh,  
Rosebale.

17th August

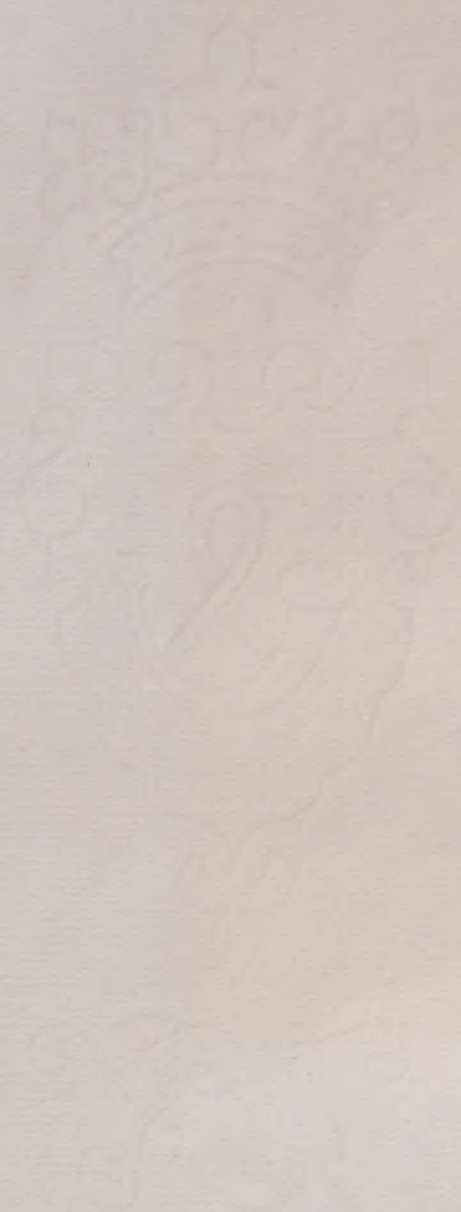
Dear Dr Raden

I have been with  
P. H. M. and the  
deputy of your father.  
I had been under for  
finding it to me it  
is most interesting &  
I read it with much  
pleasure.

I am sure that you

St. Edmund Order (1845-1924)







1918

Staplehurst.

Wendas.

Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> 1918

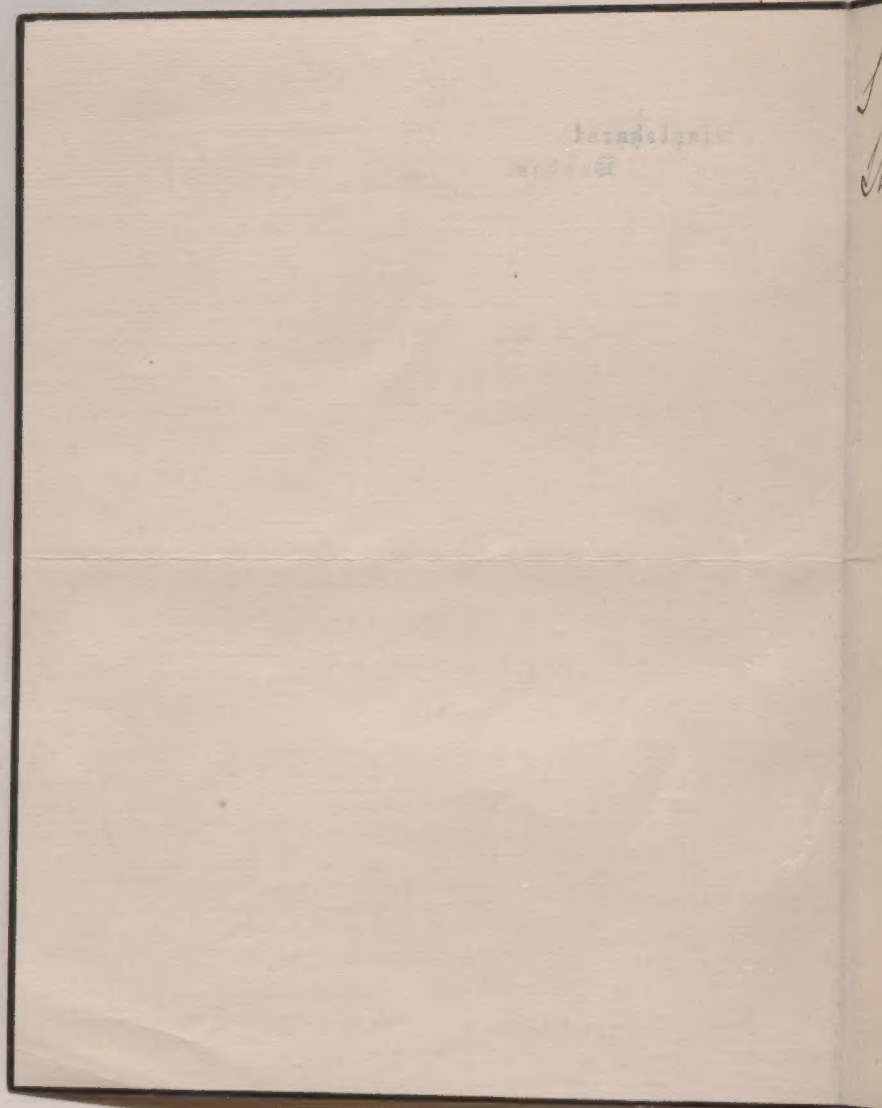
My dear Mr. Hudson

I must apologise  
for delay in acknowledging  
your most interesting  
paper on the literary  
character in the writings of  
Sir William Osler

Thanking you most  
sincerely and with  
much appreciation of  
your very true to life

Charlotte Elizabeth Osler  
(Mrs H.C. Gray)  
(1847-1925)







Sketch of the Man as  
Shewn in his Writings  
Charlotte E. Gwynn

---

Charlotte Elizabeth Olsens  
(Mrs H.C. Gwynn)  
(1847-1925)







28 Mc Master Avenue  
Toronto Canada  
Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> 1918

From Journal  
of the  
(1918-1919)

Dear Sir,

I most sincerely thank  
you for your very kind gift of the  
reprint of the article written by  
you on the varied literary allusions  
in the works of my cousin, Sir  
William Osler. It has opened  
my eyes to many, classical and  
otherwise, which my limited reading  
would have passed unnoticed.  
My cousin wrote saying that he



he had asked you to send me a  
copy, knowing how interested I  
should be. Your very clear and  
appreciative paper has, I am  
sure, been a great pleasure to  
him. Allow me again to offer  
you my most sincere thanks.

Yours truly

Henrietta Allen



I mislaid your letter with the  
address and have only now  
found it. - Pray forgive the  
tardy acknowledgment of your  
kind courtesy.

Yours faithfully  
John  
(1894-1895)









100 EAST SEVENTIETH STREET

Dear Mr. Radin

Through some mistake  
your letter & paper were  
mislaid while I was  
absent in the country & has  
just been received - I have  
been so unkind in  
reading it & am delighted  
to receive it - It is very

Yours truly  
Wm. Brewster







So it is long to find such  
a delightful appreciation  
of Sir William Osler &  
I am charmed with it.

With very many thanks

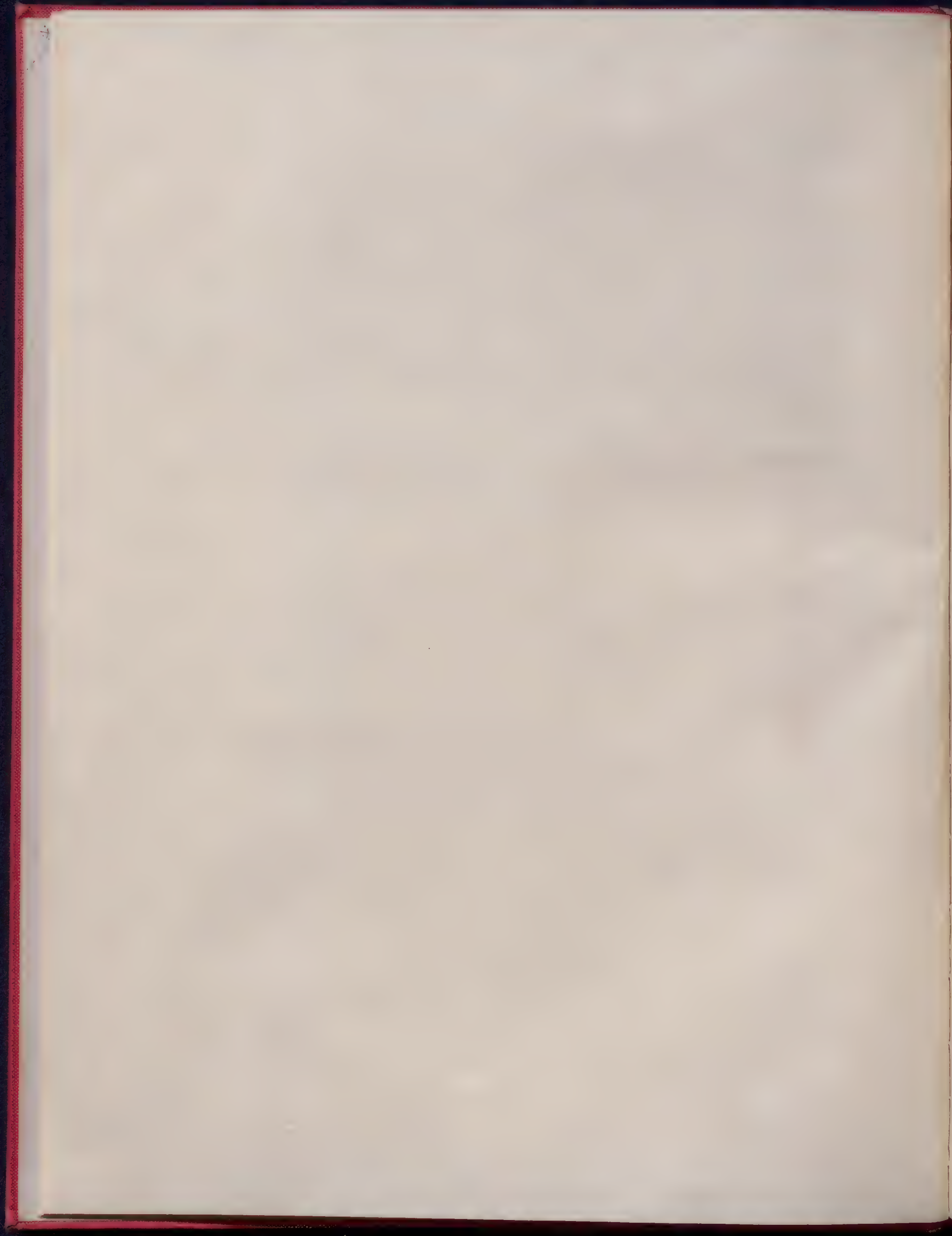
Truly yours,

Robert Brunsden

Jan 22 (1915)

Robert Brunsden  
Jan 22 1915







1/6/50

It's all my fault

I had no right to  
jump to conclusions.

I've just looked at

Alex's letter, & he says:

"If you have reprints  
please send them to Judge  
Alex, Toronto General Trust  
Co. (What right had I to  
assume that that was

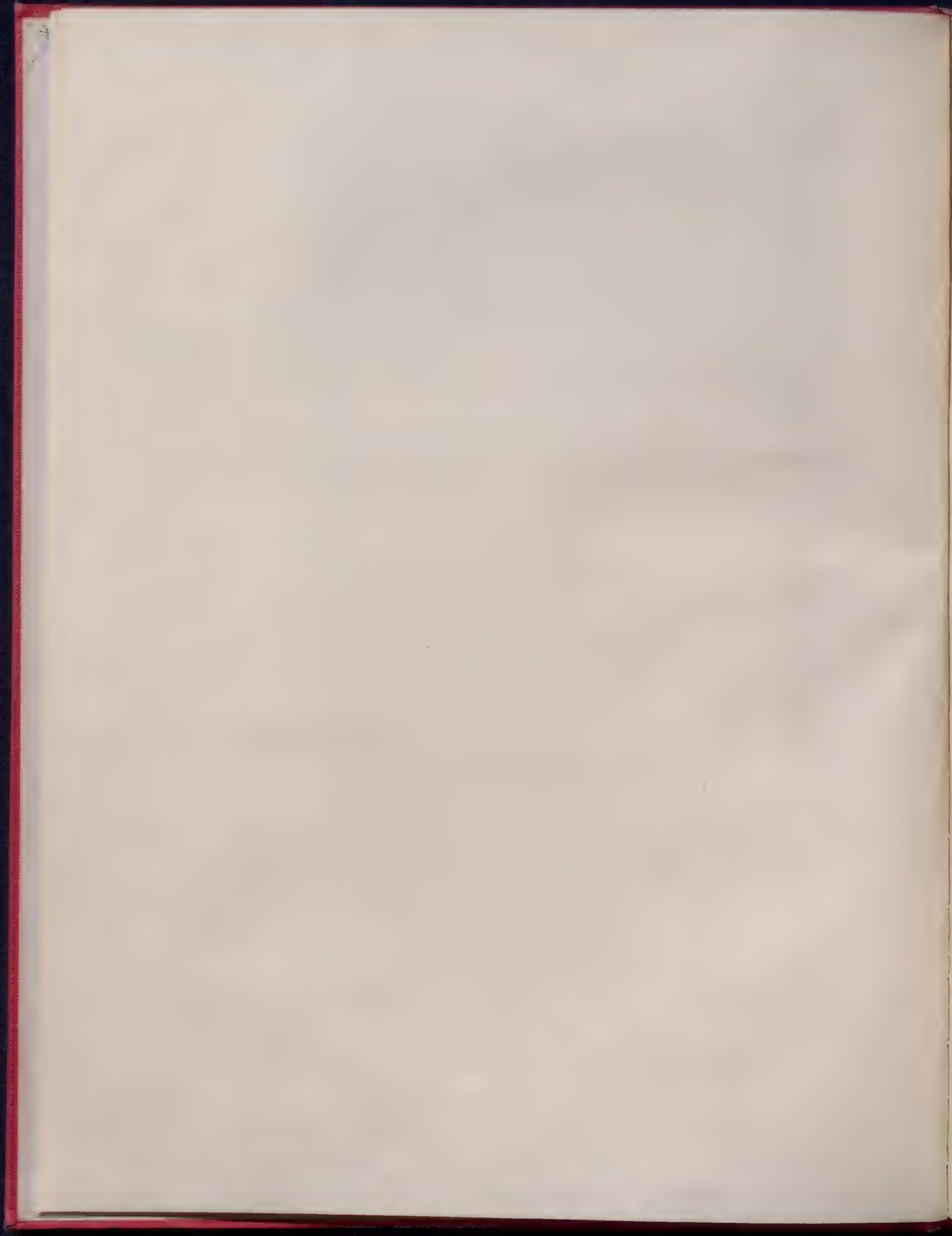
"Frank" ?), Sir E.B. Alex.

Rosedale Toronto, Ont.

Herbert Givon, Windsor Ontario,

Mrs. Robert Brewster







100 East 70<sup>th</sup> St. N.Y.  
Miss B. Francis 41  
Sussex St. Toronto  
(you sister? I didn't  
hear from her). + Miss  
Glen 28 Mac Master Ave.  
Toronto " Well, anyway,  
a brother is a brother!

Happy New Year.

H.T.R.

Herman T. Radin







THE LITERARY FLAVOR IN THE  
WRITINGS OF SIR WILLIAM  
OSLER

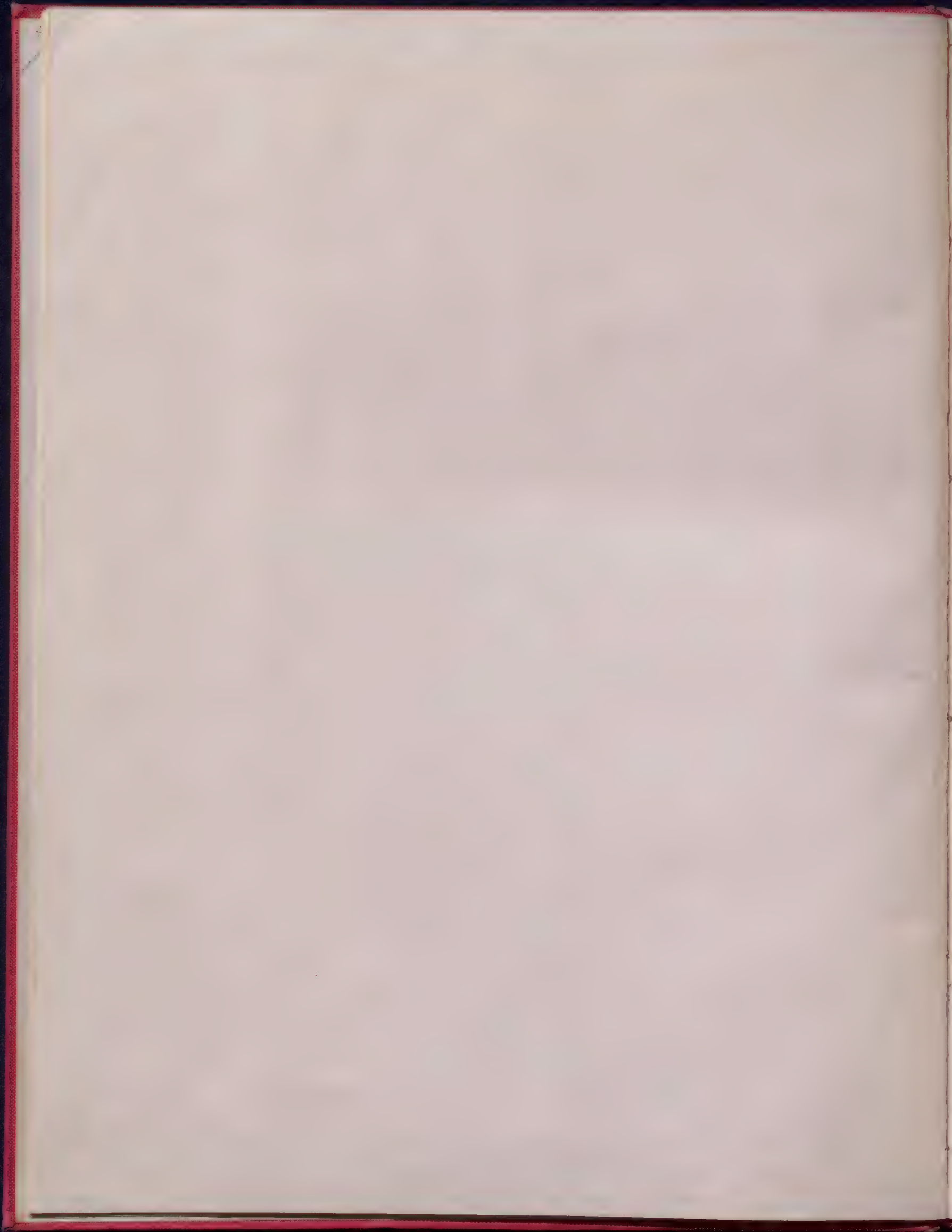
BY

HERMAN T. RADIN, M. D.,

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Reprint from  
THE MEDICAL PICKWICK,  
Vol. IV., No. 8, 1918.







## THE LITERARY FLAVOR IN THE WRITINGS OF SIR WILLIAM OSLER



ONLY the other day, in his Presidential Address to the Classical Association in London, so great an authority as Professor Gilbert Murray referred to his successor in the Presidency of the Association, Sir William Osler, as being equally distinguished as a physician and man of letters. And a few years ago, in commenting editorially upon the bestowal of a baronetcy upon the Regius Professor of Physic at Oxford, that exemplar of the literary newspaper, the *Evening Post*, of New York, spoke of his influence as being due to the "extraordinary charm of a rare and poetic personality," adding, in its expression of regret for his having permanently left America, that "it is easy to understand that the attractions of Oxford, to a man in whom both literary taste and the historic sense are so highly developed as they are in Dr. Osler, were irresistible." All this we bring to mind simply by way of introduction to a formal discussion (for the first time, so far as we are aware) of Sir William Osler as a man of letters.

It has, of course, long been known to every careful and educated reader of even the purely technical medical writings of Dr. Osler that not the least of their charms was the grace and ease with which the author intermingled literary and historical allusions with the more prosaic subject-matter. Many of my readers may recall the amusing and ingenious examination-paper, in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, perhaps ten years ago, submitted by a witty and observant physician, on Osler's "Practice of Medicine." Here we were asked to tell what was the advice of the physician Rondibilis to Panurge, and what was the treatment for hiccough recommended by Eryximachus to Aristophanes. We were called upon to state who it was who said: "A bloody Moloch rules in our chairs of medicine," and to answer many other questions of like interest.

I am quoting from memory, as after this lapse of time I cannot lay my mind on the particular number containing the examination-paper, but the clever author deserved to be better remembered. He might also have asked (perhaps he did ask!) what the case of the Shunamite woman was; who the famous patient of John Locke was, and what disease the patient was suffering from; who the royal patient of John of Gaddesden was, and

what treatment was prescribed; what disease was called the "Captain of the men of Death," and by whom. But why should I reveal more of the literary secrets hidden in Osler's "Practice of Medicine"? Let each reader dig them out for himself.

To be serious, however, all this indicates pretty clearly how the tedium and drab color of a purely technical work may be relieved by the possession of a charming English style, a gift of graceful, flowing expression, and the practical application of an enormous store of literary and historical knowledge. Gifts and acquirements such as these can, and do, make a text-book of medicine, or even an address on "The Treatment of Disease" (delivered before the Ontario Medical Association, Toronto, 1909), or an address on "Specialism in the General Hospital" (Johns Hopkins, 1913), as interesting as any novel or a belletristic essay.

Both from the standpoint of medicine and of English the gain from such writing is incalculable. When we think of the harsh, crabbed, slovenly, nay even faulty English that we are accustomed to in medical books and papers by even distinguished physicians—so accustomed, in fact, that "medical English" causes our professional brethren more amusement than pain or dismay—writing such as that of Professor Osler comes like a breath of fresh air. We grant, at the same time, that not every medical writer is an Osler, just as but few among the enormous number of scientific authors can hope to be distinguished for the simplicity and clarity of Darwin and Tyndall, or the charm, grace and forcefulness of Huxley.

All that has so far been said, applies only to Sir William's technical or semi-technical writings. We may well imagine how much more elbow-room the literary graces enjoy in the various historical, biographical and occasional addresses and essays, spread out over a long period of years, and subsequently collected in volume and pamphlet form, for our delectation. For a man who has spent all of a long working life in the assiduous pursuit of medical knowledge—knowledge which has made him one of the most renowned of the world's physicians—one wonders where Dr. Osler, in the waking hours of a brief day, could possibly have found the time for such a tremendous amount of reading, or even for the mere task of writing these papers. That is, one would



wonder, did one not reflect that the men busiest and most successful in their vocations always find ample time for their avocations. For the breadth and extent of Dr. Osler's reading are truly extraordinary, and would do great credit to the scholar engaged in purely literary studies, to say nothing of one as keen as our author to obey the exactions of a hard task-master like the unremitting study of medicine. Simply by way of illustration, let us take the lecture on "Science and Immortality," delivered at Harvard in 1904. This lecture, aptly called by the *Lancet* "a modern Religio Medici," covers but forty-two brief printed pages, and yet in this small space we find quotations from, or references to, the following imposing list of authors: Plato, Omar Khayyam, Tennyson, Swift, Browning, Sir Thomas Browne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Terence, Goethe, Homer, Jowett, Milton, Coleridge, the Bible, Shelley, Donne, Waller, Howells, Pater, Horace, Erasmus, Margaret Deland, Lucian, Matthew Arnold, Henry More the Cambridge Platonist, Montaigne, Stephen Phillips, Robert Burton, F. W. H. Myers, the "psychic researcher," Cardinal Newman, William James, Herbert Spencer, Cicero, Richard Crashaw, and the "Letters of a Chinese Official" (which anonymous work, by the way, Osler, like many others, really attributed to a Chinese source, the author, Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson, having not then unveiled his anonymity).

Now this is certainly a formidable list, like Homer's catalogue of ships, or the shield of Achilles, but we would not have our readers for a moment believe that the essay cited, or any other, is heavily interlarded with quotations from many and divers authors, dragged in haphazard, to make a parade of learning, in the manner of Robert Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" (on which famous book, incidentally, Sir William had a delightful essay in the *Yale Review* two or three years ago). No one could less resemble Burton than Osler in this respect. He quotes always without pedantry or ostentation. There is no show of learning. The quotation is as modest as the man—as quiet and as unobtrusive. It does not create the slightest annoying ripple on the smooth surface of the printed page.

Dr. Osler's own opinion of the status of medical men in literature may be well gathered from the following paragraph in his essay on Dr. Holmes: "While it is true that since Rabelais and Linacre no generation has lacked a physician to stand unabashed in the temple of Delos, a worshipper of worth and merit amid the votaries of Apollo, I can recall no name in the past three centuries eminent in literature—eminent, I mean, in the sense

in which Goldsmith is eminent—which is associated in any enduring way with work done in the science and art of medicine. Many physicians—active practitioners—Sir Thomas Browne, for example, have been and are known for the richness and variety of their literary work; but as a rule those who have remained in professional life have courted the 'draggled-tailed muses' as a gentle pastime, to interpose a little ease amid the worries of practice. Few such have risen above mediocrity; fewer still have reached it. We know the names of Garth, of Arbuthnot, and of Akenside, but we neither know them nor their works. The list is a long one, for the rites of Apollo have always had a keen attraction for the men of our ranks, but the names fill at the best a place in the literature of the country, not a place in the hearts and lives of the people. Far otherwise is it with a select group of men, Goldsmith, Crabbe and Keats, who, at the outset members of our profession, early broke away from its drudgery. In pride we claim them, though in reality no influence of their special studies is to be found in their writings. Two of these, at least, reached the pure empyrean, and, to use Shelley's words, robed in dazzling immortality, sit on thrones

'—built beyond mortal thought,  
Far in the unapparent.' "

This is not only a just and temperate appraisal of the place of the physician in literary history, but it gives us as well a taste of Osler's literary quality.

It will be noticed that in the preceding paragraph there is a reference to Sir Thomas Browne. It would be surprising indeed if there were no mention of him in this connection, for in Sir William Osler's devotion to the famous physician and author of Norwich we encounter one of the great enthusiasms of his life. One of his most charming essays (reprinted in the volume of biographical studies, "An Alabama Student, etc.") is devoted to Browne. From Sir Thomas he quotes almost constantly, and in a perusal of Dr. Osler's writings we should not experience the slightest difficulty in determining who his favorite author is. Both in the essay on Browne and in the address, "After Twenty-five Years," delivered to the students at his *alma mater* in 1899, he tells us how this life-long affection began. "To the writings of one old physician I can urge your closest attention. There have been, and happily, there are still in our ranks notable illustrations of the intimate relations between medicine and literature, but in the group of literary physicians, Sir Thomas Browne stands pre-eminent. The 'Religio Medici', one of the great English classics, should



be in the hands—in the heart, too—of every medical student. \* \* \* No book has had so enduring an influence on my life. I was introduced to it by my first teacher, the Rev. W. A. Johnson,\* warden and founder of the Trinity College School, and I can recall the delight with which I first read its quaint and charming pages. It was one of the strong influences which turned my thoughts towards medicine as a profession, and my most treasured copy—the second book I ever bought—has been a constant companion for thirty-one years—*comes viae vitaeque*."

It is quite in place here to quote the rest of the paragraph containing this admirable tribute, because not only does it reveal his own enthusiasm for the treasures of literature, but it embodies as well his earnest advice to medical students to cultivate early a taste for literature and art. "While medicine is to be your vocation or calling, see to it that you have also an avocation—some intellectual passion which may serve to keep you in touch with the world of art, of science, or of letters. Begin at once the cultivation of some interest other than the purely professional. \* \* No matter what it is, but have an outside hobby. For the hard working medical student it is perhaps easiest to keep up an interest in literature. \* \* When tired of anatomy, refresh your mind with Oliver Wendell Holmes; after a worrying subject in physiology, turn to the great idealists, to Shelley or Keats for consolation; when chemistry distresses your soul, seek peace in the great pacifier, Shakespeare; and when the complications of pharmacology are unbearable, ten minutes with Montaigne will lighten the burden. \* \* \* Trite but true is the comment of Seneca—'If you are fond of books, you will escape the *ennui* of life, you will neither sigh for evening, disgusted with the occupations of the day—nor will you live dissatisfied with yourself or unprofitable to others.'"

And again, to quote from "The Master-Word in Medicine" (even at the risk of tiring my readers, although I hope they will agree with me that quoting from Osler is never tiresome), Dr. Osler advises his hearers—the undergraduates of Toronto University: "Start at once a bedside library, and spend the last half-hour of the day in communion with the saints of humanity. There are great lessons to be learned from Job and from David, from Isaiah and St. Paul. Taught by Shakespeare, you may take your intellectual and moral measure with singular precision. Learn to love Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Should you be so fortunate as to be born a Platonist, Jowett will introduce you to the great master

\*To him his "Practice of Medicine" is dedicated.

through whom alone we can think in certain levels, and whose perpetual modernness startles and delights. Montaigne will teach you moderation in all things, and to be 'sealed of his tribe' is a special privilege."

Here we meet some more of Sir William's favorite authors—Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley, Montaigne. Nor does this exhaust the list, as we have just seen above. The text-book, the addresses, the biographical essays are full of allusions to, or quotations from, Plato, Aristotle, the Bible and Goethe. His love for Plato cannot be better demonstrated than by the long, informing and delightful paper on "Physic and Physicians as Depicted in Plato," found in the volume "Aequanimitas." His thorough acquaintance with the Greek classics is implied in his frequently expressed preference for the Greek view of life over the Hebrew—meaning by that, no doubt, his preference for the quest of beauty and of joyousness, rather than for the attitude of sombre introspection and the search for spiritual sanctity. But Dr. Osler is old-fashioned enough to know and love his Bible, as a rare literary treasure—both the Old and New Testaments—and its wonderful passages come trippingly on his tongue. He delights as well in that modern fountain-head of noble and beautiful prose, Cardinal Newman. At the end of the volume "Aequanimitas" he compiles the "Bedside Library for Medical Students" that he has suggested in a passage quoted above, citing the following ten authors: Old and New Testament; Shakespeare; Montaigne; Plutarch's Lives; Marcus Aurelius; Epictetus; Religio Medici; Don Quixote; Emerson; Oliver Wendell Holmes. This, of course, is meant only for a beginning. As Osler himself says, "there are many others."

In the charming essay on Robert Burton (which is certainly worthy of rescue from the possible fate of oblivion in the pages of a magazine), we read that "the greatest gift that nature or grace can bestow upon man is the *aequus animus*—the even-balanced soul." Every reader of Sir William Osler's essays knows how highly he values *aequanimitas*—serenity of soul—for it is by that name, the title of the opening paper, that he calls a volume of the most fascinating addresses ever written for delighted medical hearers and readers. In these addresses, all delivered before medical or nursing schools or societies, and many of them previously published in medical periodicals, are revealed to the full not only the charm of his wonderfully engaging personality, but the remarkable treasure-house of a cultivated mind, stored to overflowing with the gleanings from the leading literatures of the world. In a style long notable for its singular limpidity, its simplicity and charm, he shares with



us in all of these papers, his ripe culture, his knowledge and experience, his kindliness and gentleness of spirit. In a word, he lavishes his affection not only upon "the humanities," but still more upon "humanity." To some of these addresses and papers we have already referred, but we should certainly advise our readers not to miss a single one of them. To no one well acquainted with them will it be in the least degree surprising (as the author tells us in his preface to the second edition) "that many young men on both sides of the Atlantic should have written, stating that the addresses have been helpful in forming their life ideals."

Not the least of the many debts that our profession owes to Sir William Osler is his constant insistence, both by precept and example, upon the importance of medical history and biography, and his indefatigable efforts towards the arousing of a more lively interest in these subjects among the generality of the profession. Even amidst the inexorable claims made upon him in the last four years by that great event which is making medical history as well as every other sort of history, he has found time to turn aside to give his moral encouragement (though, alas, not to submit a contribution of his own) to that admirable and most promising venture, the "Annals of Medical History," of which the third number has but this moment appeared. In one of those inspiring bits of advice to medical students, in "The Student Life," he urges them to "try, in the waiting years, to get a clear idea of the history of medicine. Read Foster's Lectures on the History of Physiology, Baas's History of Medicine." Sir Michael Foster and even the redoubtable Dr. Baas would certainly have appreciated the tribute implied in being singled out in this fashion. In these latter days Dr. Osler would perhaps have added Puschmann's "Handbuch," although this splendid work is still untranslated; almost certainly Neuburger's new history, for the English edition of which Sir William himself wrote the introduction; and, I have no doubt, Garrison's delightful book.

In "An Alabama Student, and Other Biographical Essays," our author has collected thirteen biographical studies, all of extraordinary interest, and written, it goes without saying, with the never-failing charm of the Oslerian style. It should be hardly a surprise to find among the subjects the names of Keats, Holmes and Sir Thomas Browne. But perhaps still more absorbing are the essays on "Thomas Dover, Physician and Buccaneer (him of the famous powders); "John Locke as a Physician," in which the famous case alluded to at the beginning of the present paper is discussed in detail; "A Back-

woods Physiologist," the story of the obscure army surgeon William Beaumont and the epoch-making case of Alexis St. Martin, which marked a mile-stone in the progress of physiology; Fracastorius; and "Harvey and His Discovery." And certainly we must not omit to make mention of the separately published pamphlet on Michael Servetus, heretic and physician, who disputes with Harvey and Realduus Columbo a claim to priority in the discovery of the circulation of the blood. Finally, of these biographical essays, there remains to mention the fascinating little volume on that prince of medical humanists, Thomas Linacre, of which it suffices to say that it lacks not one whit the attractive qualities of the others. It is inevitable that we should notice some gaps in the list of subjects, and the present writer, for one, would have eagerly welcomed Dr. Osler's discussion of a kindred spirit, the celebrated Edinburgh physician, essayist and letter-writer, Dr. John Brown, who would be entitled to a small share of immortality if for nothing else than those exquisite idyls, "Marjorie Fleming" and "Rab and his friends."

Of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" Osler says (as does everyone else, for that matter) that it "smells of the lamp." No such reproach can be leveled against these writings of the Regius Professor, despite his ominous title. These are not simply the "elegant effusions" of a gentleman with some claims to learning and education. There is nothing either academic or superficial about them. They are solid productions, thoroughly informed, and based on all the available sources of knowledge of the subject-matter, for whether Dr. Osler writes a text-book of medicine, a technical paper or a biographical essay, it is certain that every source of information will be known to him, and that he will make each pay heavy toll. Of the occasional addresses it would be no compliment to make a similar statement. To these we are paying the highest tribute when we say that they are based simply upon his amazing fund of general and special knowledge, and his life-long study of, and acquaintance with, the problems of humanity.

Sir William Osler is, of course, a bibliophile and a "book collector," in the special sense of that word. He is an avid searcher for medical first editions" and bibliographic rarities or similar treasures. It would be surprising indeed if he were not, for this passion is the origin of many of these studies. "Aequanimitas" contains two addresses on "Books and Men" and "American Medical Bibliography." In his address on Sir Thomas Browne, in explaining the origin of his affection for this life-long favorite of his, he says: "I mention these circumstances



in extenuation of an enthusiasm which has enabled me to make this almost complete collection of the editions of his works I show you this evening, knowing full well the compassionate feeling with which the bibliomaniac is regarded by his saner colleagues." Fortunately, bibliomania and book-collecting are widely prevalent among physicians, most of whom will regard Sir William with anything but pity for this "failing." If we may hazard a guess, their feeling would be much more akin to envy.

Of one of the most admirable essentials of literary style—a genuine and at the same time delicate sense of humor—Dr. Osler shows himself possessed in full measure. This is exhibited on almost every page, but for a taste of his quality I cannot refrain from quoting this delicious passage from "Nurse and Patient," that remarkable address combining shrewd and trained advice and good-humored banter which the nurses of Johns Hopkins Hospital were privileged to listen to in 1897: "With the fullest kind of training you cannot escape from the perils of half-knowledge, of pseudo-science, that most fatal and common of mental states. In your daily work you involuntarily catch the accents and learn the language of science, often without a clear conception of its meaning. I turned incidentally one day to a very fine example of the nurse learned, and asked, in a humble tone, what the surgeon, whom I had failed to meet, had thought of the case, and she promptly replied that 'he thought there were features suggestive of an intracanalicular myxoma'; and when I looked anxious and queried, had

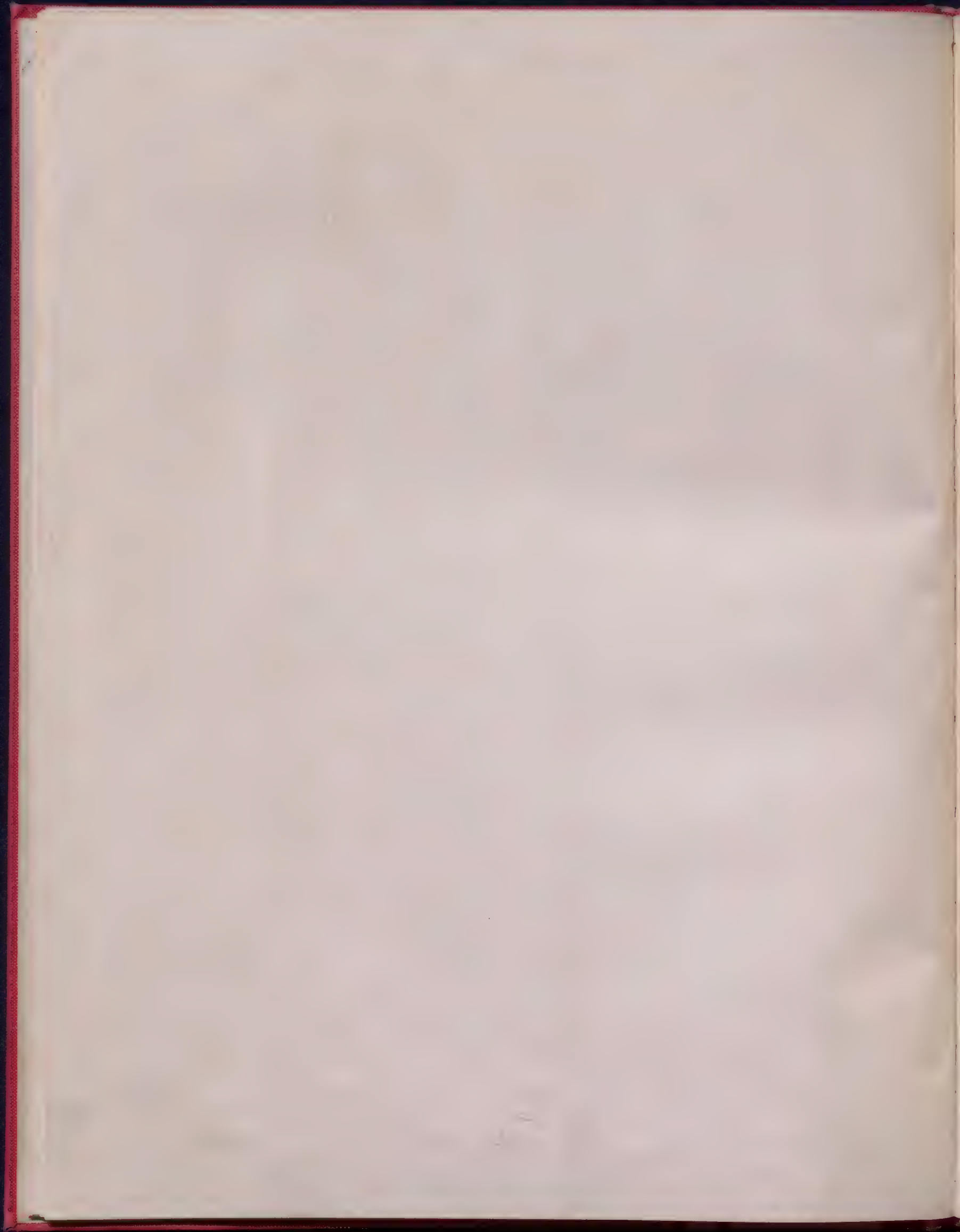
she happened to hear if he thought it had an epiblastic or mesoblastic origin, this daughter of Eve never flinched. 'Mesoblastic, I believe,' was her answer. She would have handed sponges—I mean gauze—with the same *sang froid* at a Waterloo." And in that interesting little autobiography "L'Envoi" he tells the story of his call to the University of Pennsylvania to succeed the lamented Dr. Pepper. After he received the invitation, "Dr. Mitchell cabled me to meet him in London, as he and his good wife were commissioned to 'look me over,' particularly with reference to personal conditions. Dr. Mitchell said there was only one way in which the breeding of a man suitable for such a position, in such a city as Philadelphia, could be tested—give him cherry pie and see how he disposed of the stones. I had read of the trick before and disposed of them genteelly in my spoon—and got the chair."

Not to tax further the patience of our indulgent readers, or to prolong unduly a paper sufficiently long, let us take leave, on this note of humor and good nature, of the distinguished physician and accomplished stylist and writer, in the hope of having aroused the interest of our readers to the extent at least of inducing those still unacquainted with Sir William Osler in his literary aspect to hasten to seek out these pages, while reminding those already introduced to renew and improve the friendship.

HERMAN T. RADIN, M. D.

New York, N. Y.







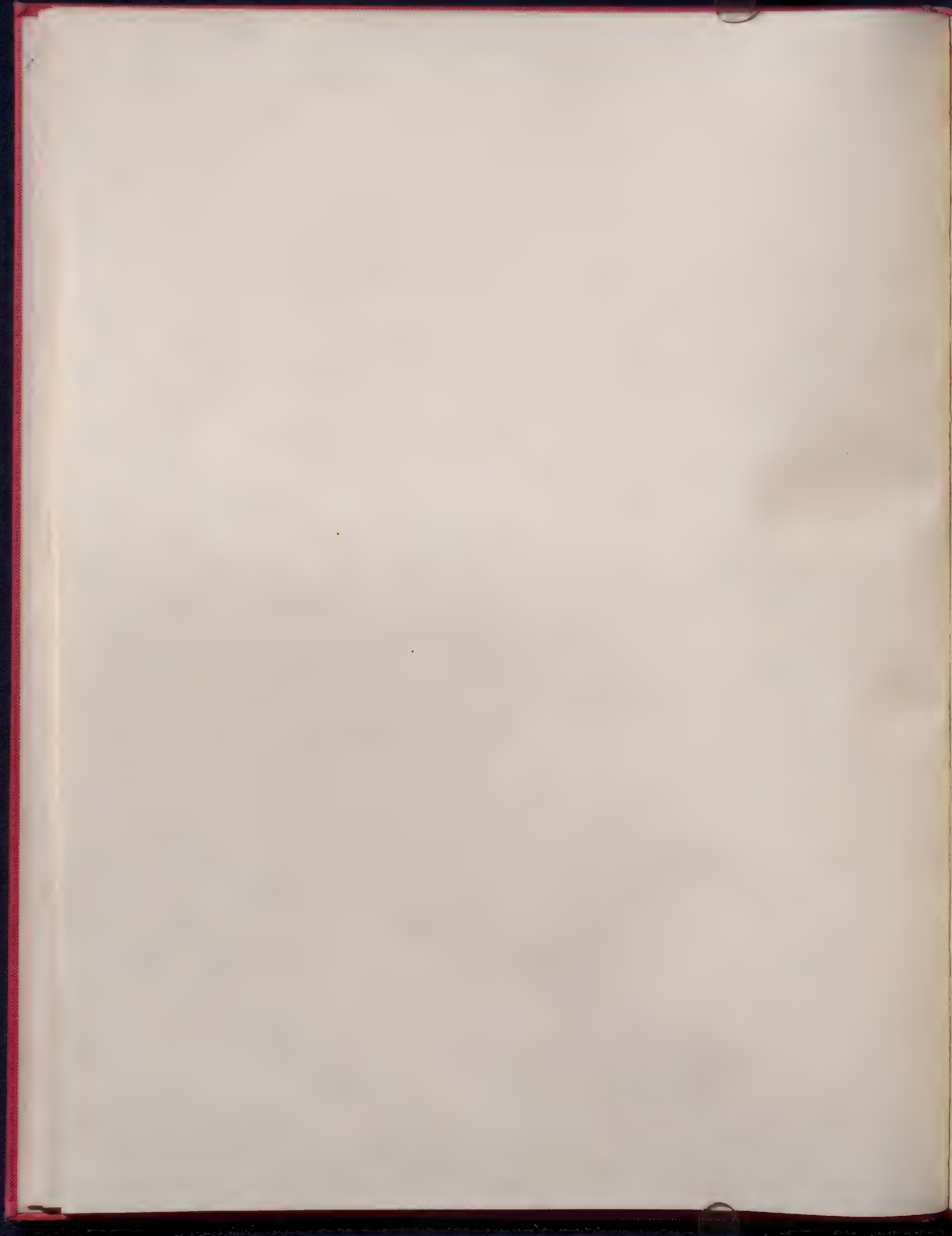






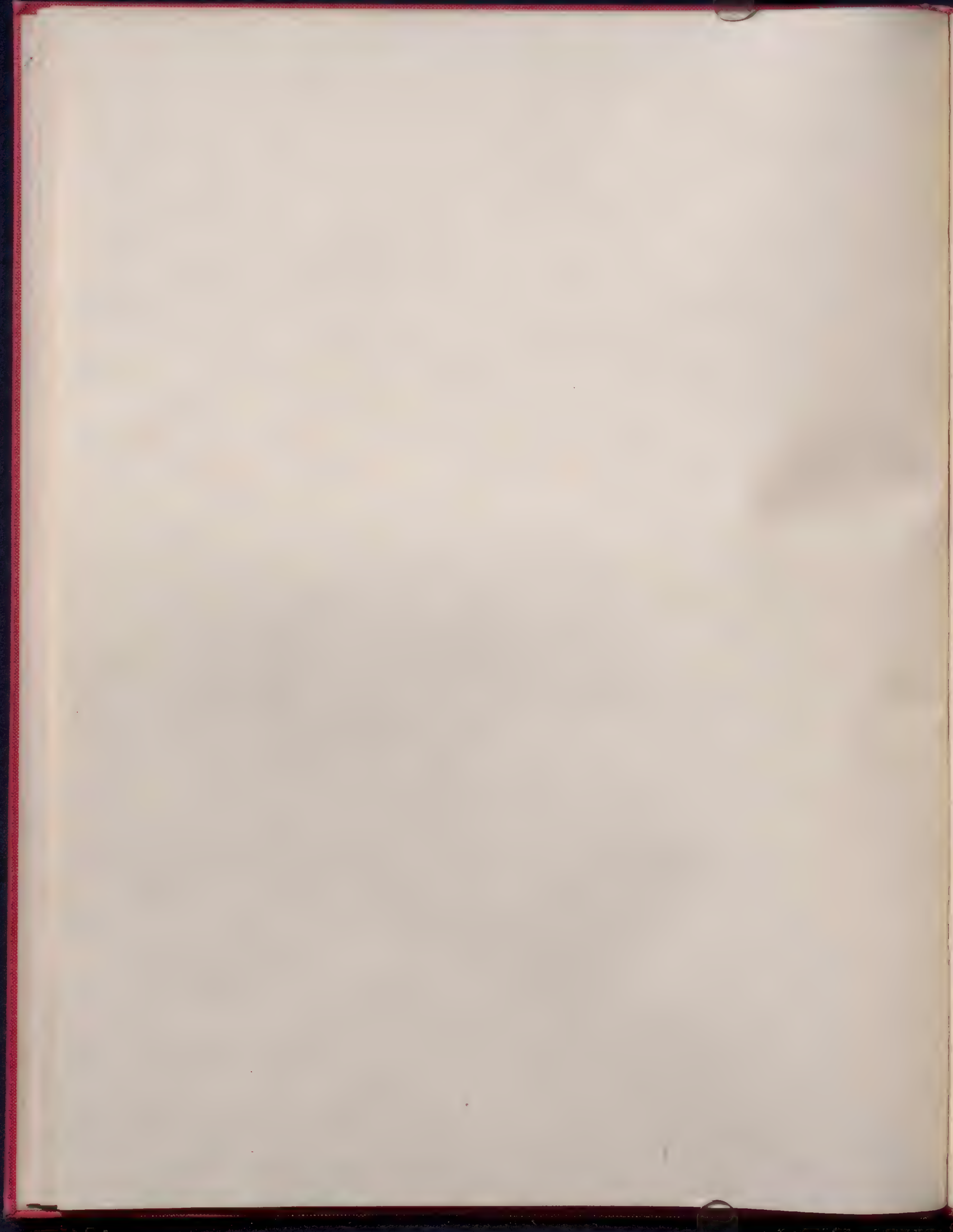






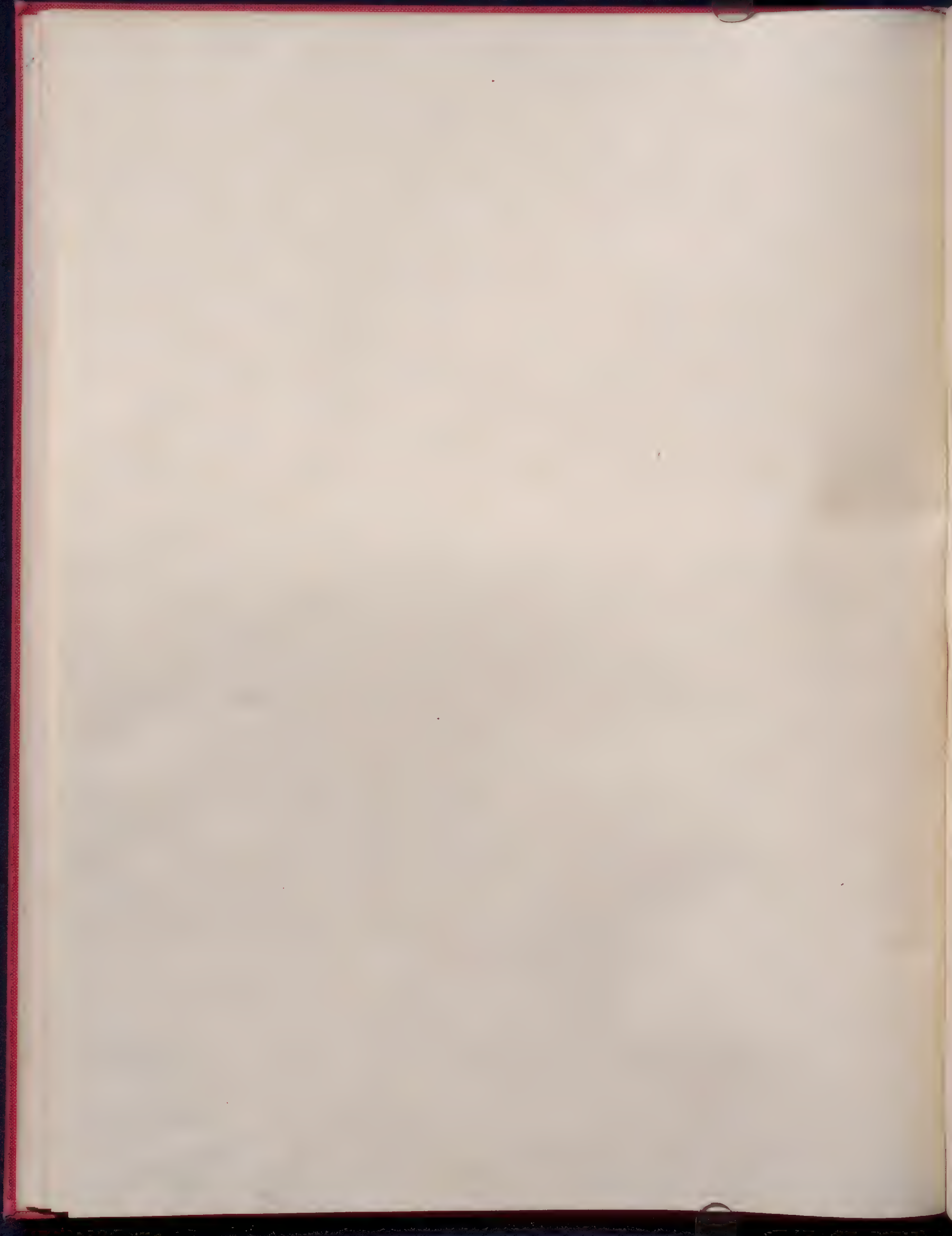






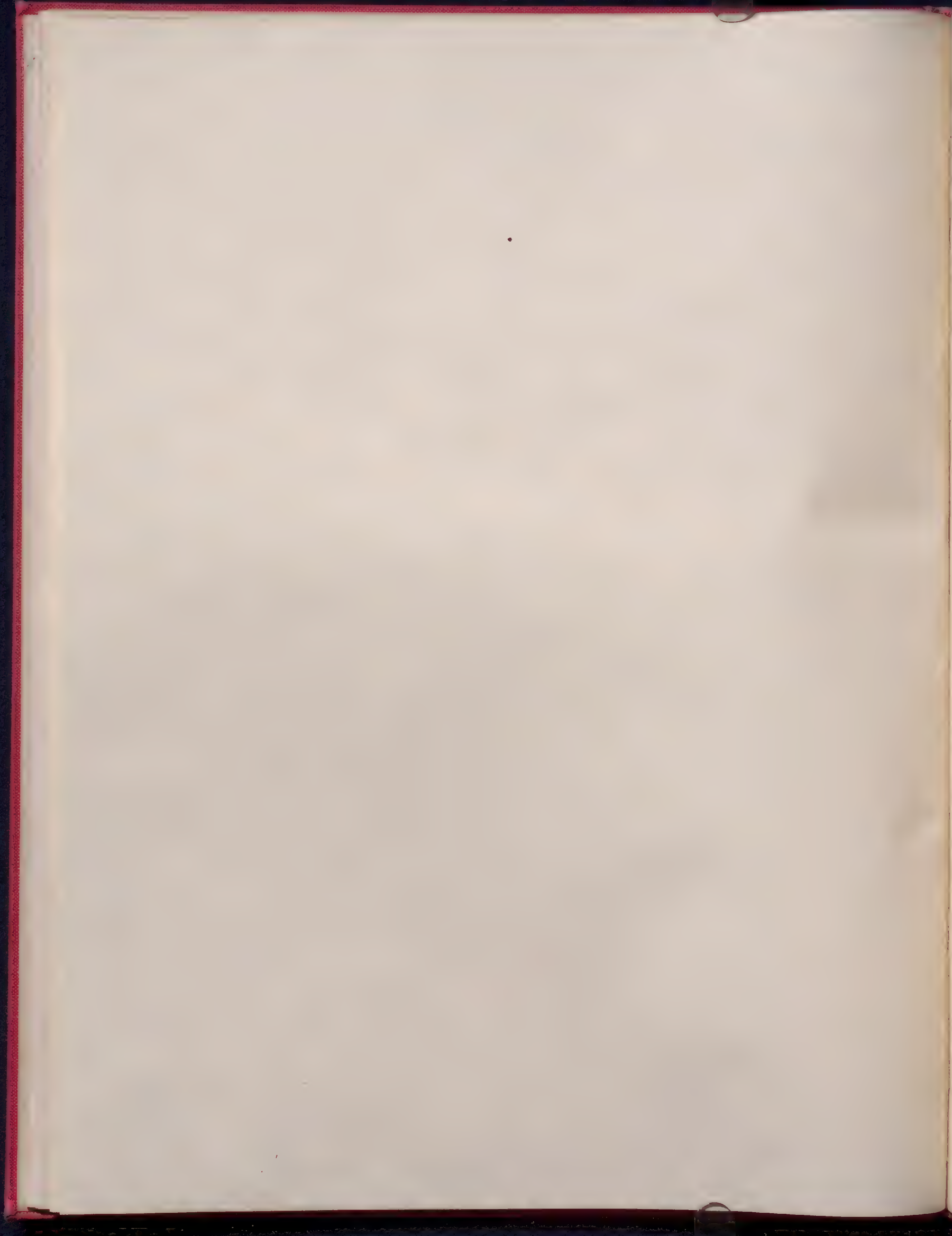






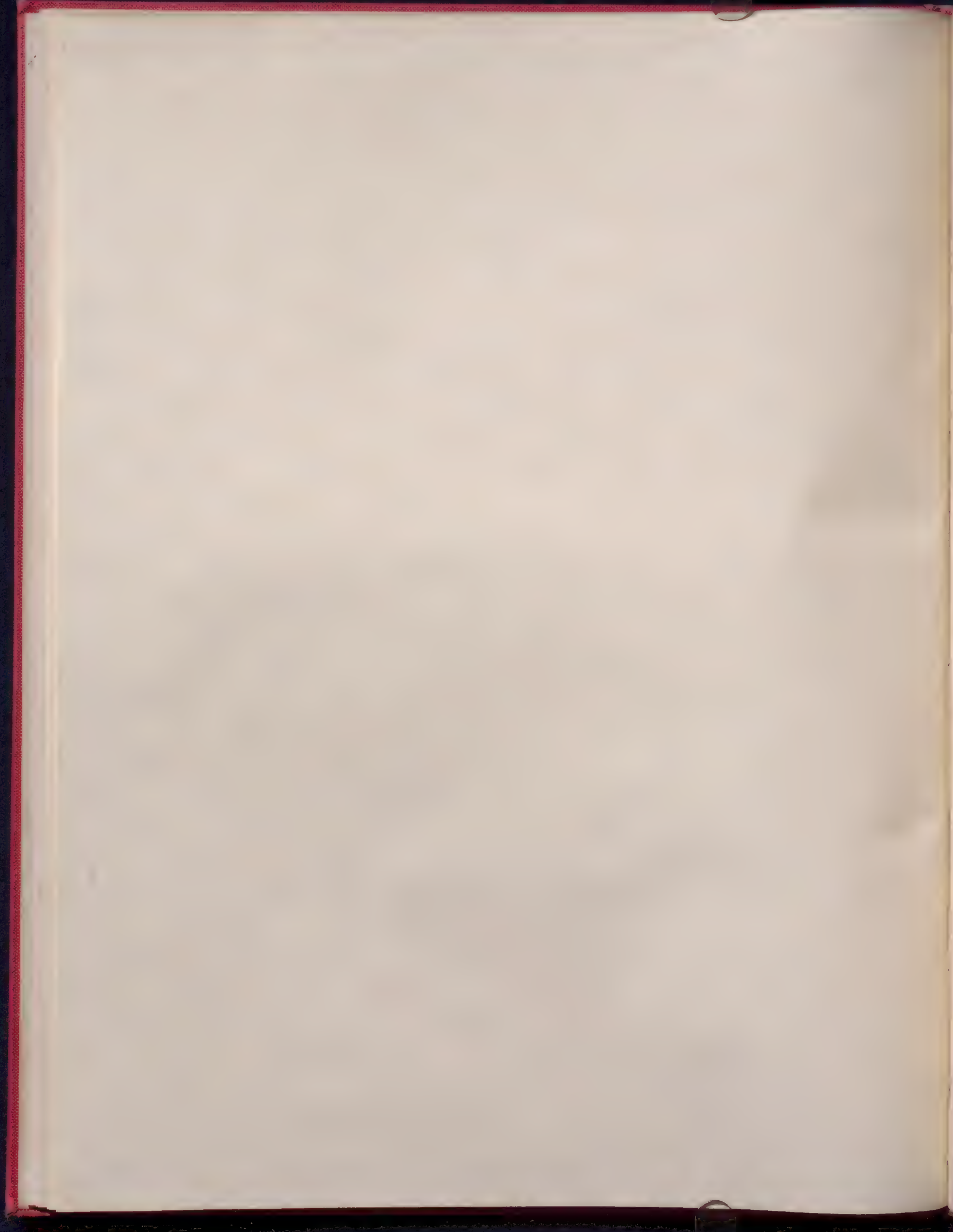






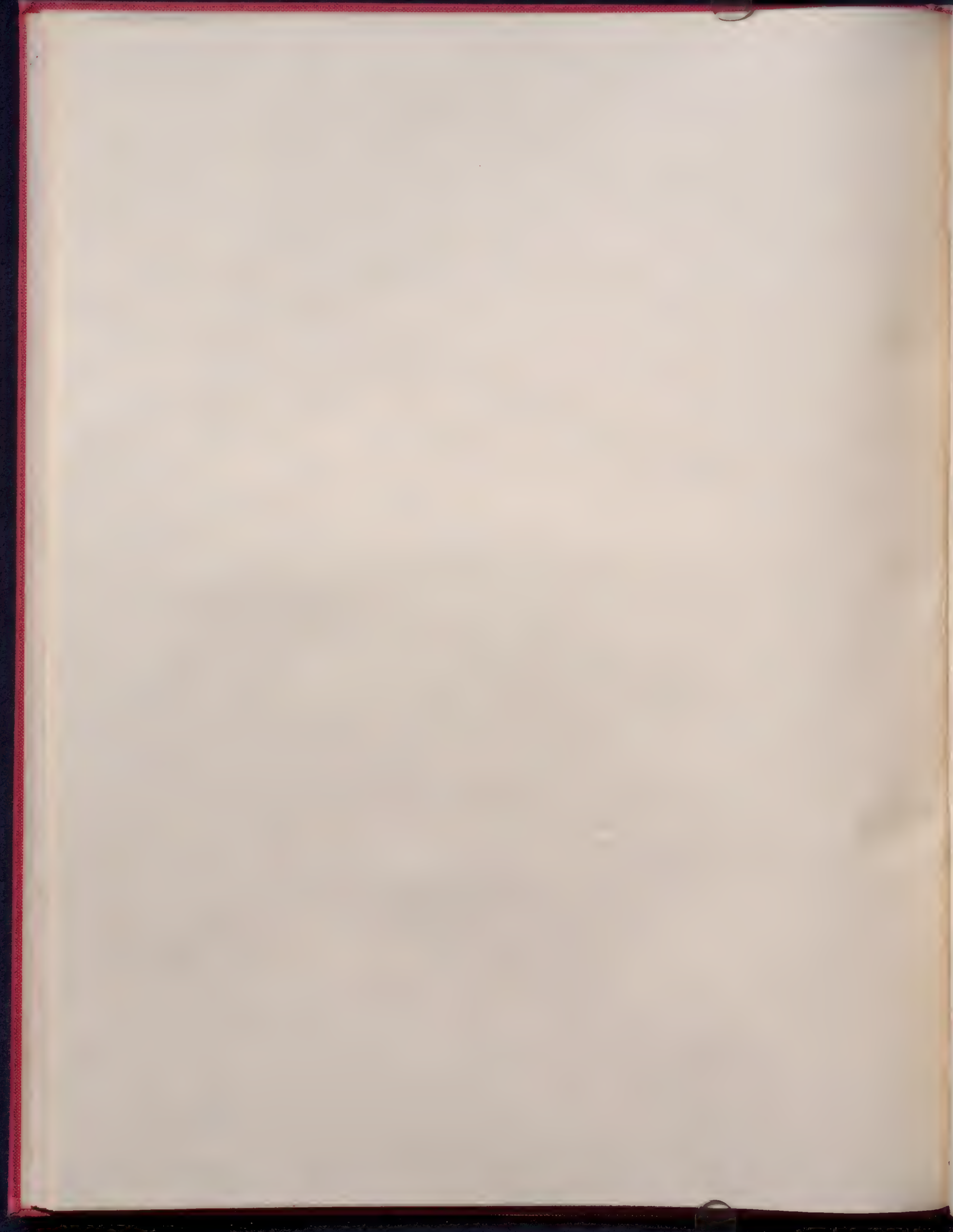






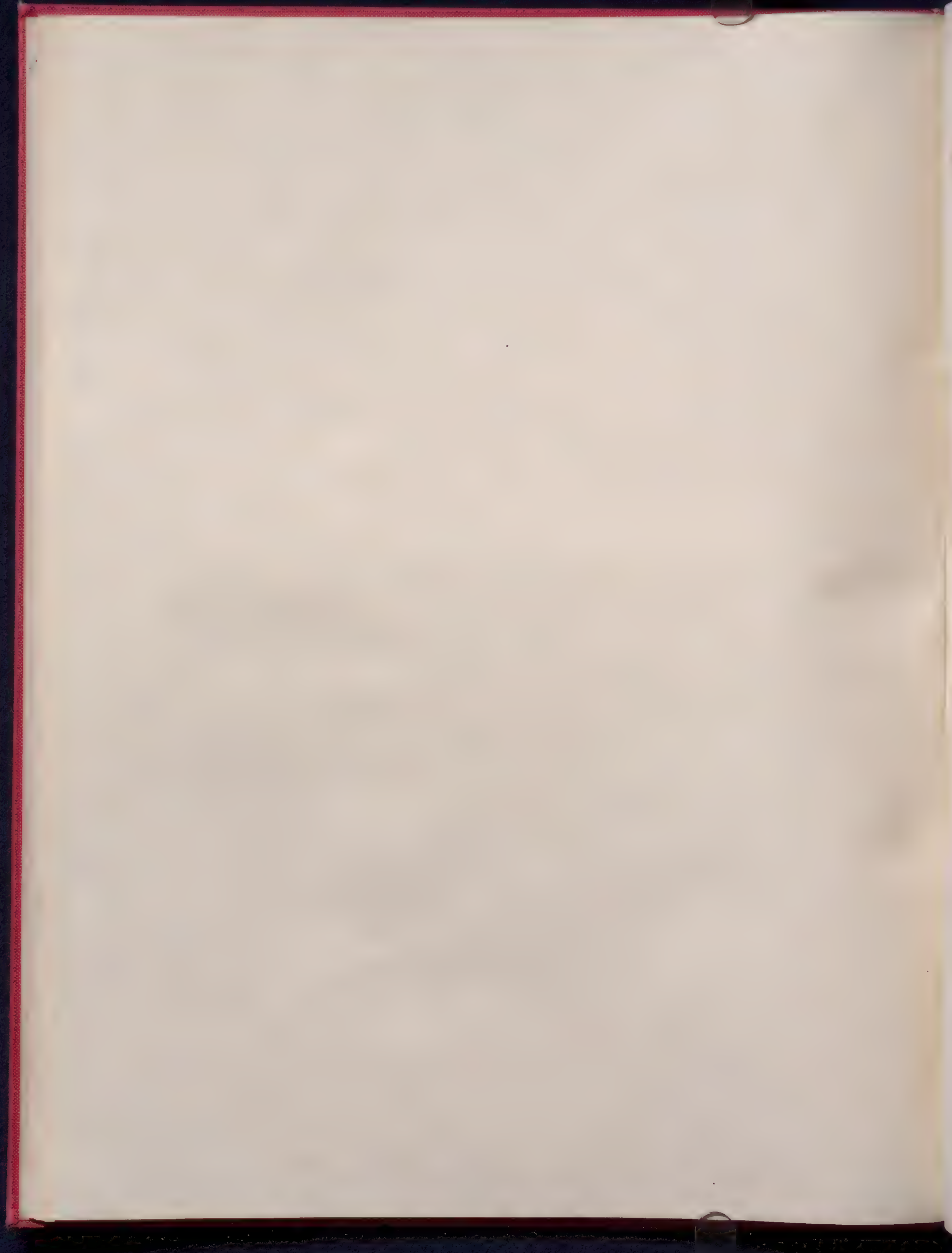








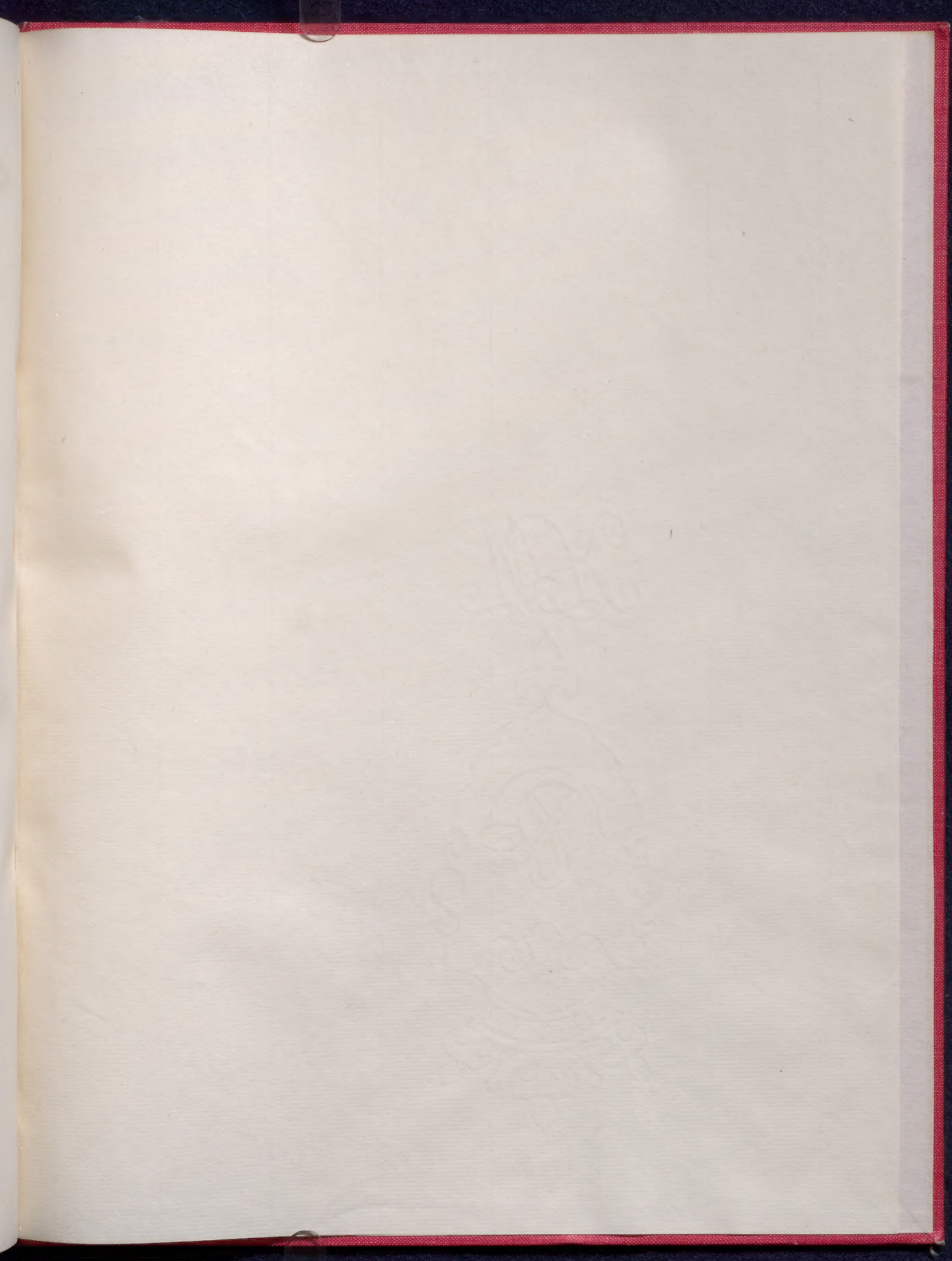




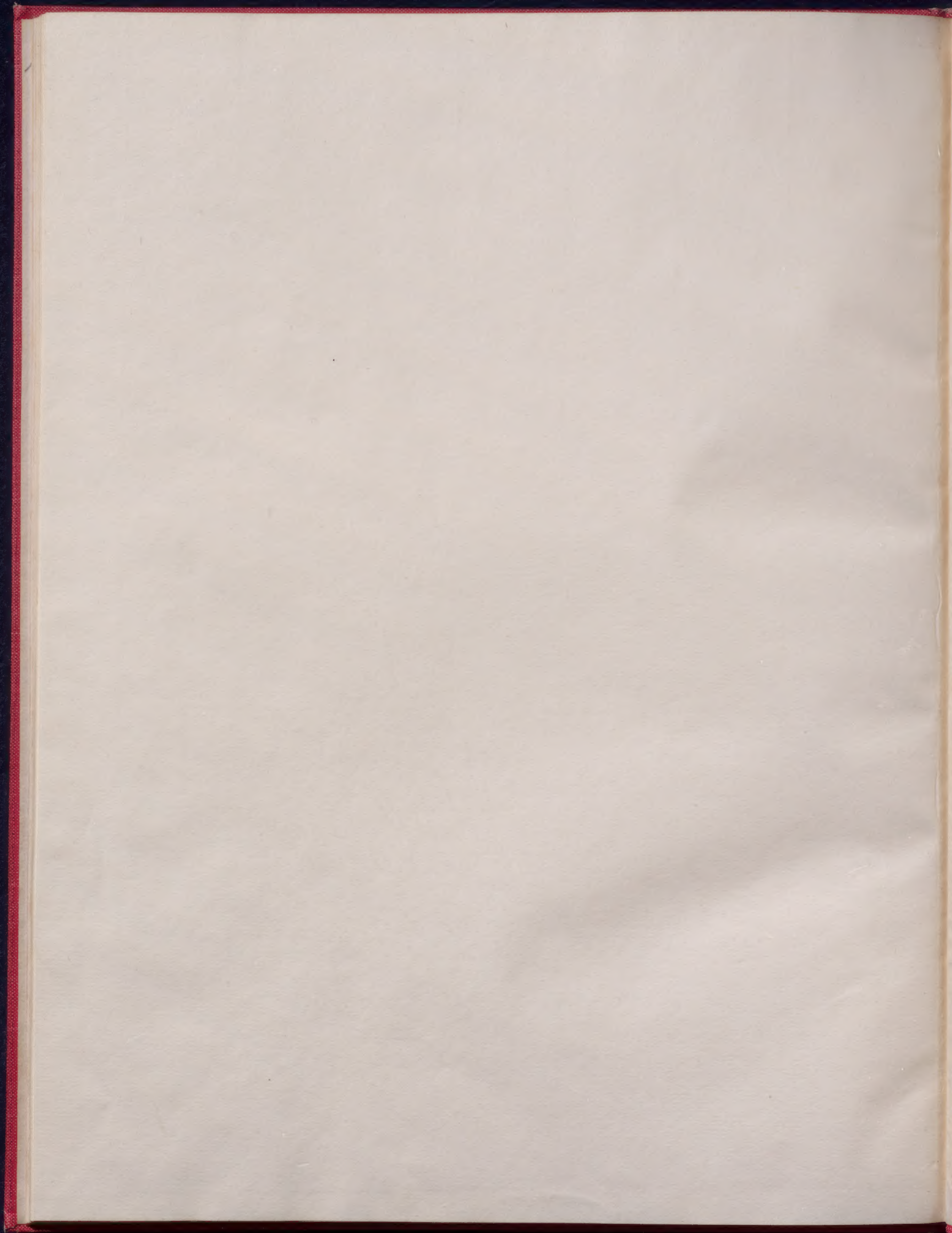














Oster  
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Folio  
R1292  
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